Volume 18 No. 12 April 2008

TRUTH ABOUT POWER IS SPOKEN HERE
WIP
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Condo outbreak at downtown waterfront approaches

by WIP News Service

While developer Triway is once again scheming to transform Olympia's waterfront into a profitable bloc of condominiums available only to the very wealthy, Olympia's new, development-friendly City Council is doing what it can to facilitate the process. On March 22, the City of Olympia conducted a forum, ostensibly to get public feedback about a proposed zoning change on the downtown waterfront area between Capital Lake and Budd Bay, the isthmus between Water Street and the 4th and 5th Avenue Bridges.

However, the forum—with its fancy graphics, slide shows and out-of-town consultant running it like the Master of Ceremonies at a cheesy wedding—made it pretty clear that a lot of money has been spent on this project already, regardless of what the public thinks. It didn't seem so much like an opportunity for community feedback as an attempt to sell the unpopular project to a reluctant public. The class angle in this proposal wasn't touched on much at the hearing, but it is pretty obvious.

The openness of the waterfront area, guaranteed by the current height limits for structures (35') is an important amenity for the general public, made clear when well over 600 people came to a hearing six years ago and overwhelmingly said "no" to a similar proposal. This openness contributes to the enjoyment of the area by everyone.

The Triway proposal would use this space to benefit a few (estimated 120 or so) relatively wealthy condominium owners who would be able to enjoy gorgeous views while looking down on us riff-raff. The proposal would alter the area from Urban Waterfront to Urban Waterfront-Housing, with only housing allowed above the first story of the buildings in the area. The condominium units are estimated to be offered at sale prices of approximately $600,000 to $1 million.

And we, the citizens of Olympia, would subsidize them further because they would pay no property taxes for 10 years. (A city ordinance, designed to stimulate housing construction in downtown Olympia, exempts all multi-family dwellings built in the downtown area from property tax on construction for ten years – tax is paid only on the land, which is a relatively small part of the property value.) Of course, the very wealthy developer would reap large profits. The bottom line—the public loses its access to the waterfront, as well as the formerly protected view from the capitol campus, and a few wealthy folks gain.

The buy-and-rezone tactic being used here is common among wealthy developers, and Triway is following the playbook. They contributed to City Council campaigns (including $1200 in 2007 to Doug Mah, according to the Public Disclosure Commission), hired a former City Councilmember (Jeanette Hawkins) to lobby the council, and hired designers and planners to sell this proposal based on its supposed benefit to the community. One tactic has been to contact neighborhood associations for support, using their biased information which includes the statement that the area would be better looking with large buildings than with small buildings (which cannot be foreseen, since this is a zoning decision, not a design decision). They're also stressing the importance of adding dense housing to the downtown, which everyone agrees with, but for which there is virtually unlimited space available in the downtown area.

Why build condos when mere photo doctoring can give the idle rich what they're looking for? Above is a rendition of the future Olympia, taken from the Triway Enterprises website.

> And we, the citizens of Olympia, would subsidize them further because they would pay no property taxes for 10 years.

At the forum, held at public expense, an out-of-town urban planning group distributed copies of a slick handout entitled "Rezoning Scenario Priority Matrix," which showed the relative merits of different rezone scenarios, with an emphasis on the environmental advantages of 65' and 90' height limits. It's almost as if they're implying the project's goal is to create housing opportunities in downtown Olympia and preserve the environment. The matrix proclaims that the re-zone would "sustainably accommodate population growth" and "reduce dependence on auto use," as if the developers are altruistically motivated, rather than interested in making money.

Friends of the Waterfront, which successfully fought a similar attempt to re-zone the isthmus in 2002, is again working to block this proposed zoning change. Anyone who wants to be on the contact list should send their name, phone number, and email address to jacobsoly@aol.com. Friends of the Waterfront will notify people of coming events.

But Bob Jacobs of Friends of the Waterfront, stressed "it is important for people to act on their own, and not wait for us."

Some possible actions for concerned community members include:

Writing Letters to the Editor of the Olympian. These are easy to send—see the Olympian's website for electronic transmission, or use a typewriter or pen and paper.

Contact the City Council and express your opinion. Call 753-8450 and leave a message with the staff for councilmembers. Or email citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us.

Talk to and email your friends about this issue. Urge them to do what they can.

Attend the Planning Commission's public hearing for the proposal on June 18.

Plan to attend the City Council public hearing in September.

Building Bridges, Not Walls

Local coalition prepares historic immigration conference

by Erika Marquez and Molly Porter of Bridges Not Walls

For far too long communities of color have been targeted, used as scapegoats, and exploited by those in power, a trend that can currently be seen in the national rhetoric surrounding migrants living in the United States. The dominant culture is one of deep-rooted xenophobia based on a set of irrational falsehoods that are constantly being perpetuated by government and media led propaganda. The result of these prescribed myths has been the creeping militarization of our communities as borders are fortified, and migrants are taken violently, and in secrecy, from their homes by federal agents.

In response, the conversation surrounding the "immigration issue" must be reclaimed and viewed as a human rights issue. We as a society need to address the root causes of immigration – economic and social inequality, Free Trade policies, displacement, etc. – and move from the framework of "legal" vs. "illegal" when it comes to a human being, because this outlook negates our collective humanity.

Ideological borders, the base of an unjust immigration policy, are accompanied by physical borders, which are fortified with walls and weapons. Inflexible borders warrant a distinction between people, a determinant factor that is used only to separate and then subjugate one to the other. Borders and walls serve only to keep us apart, compartmentalize, and classify us, when the reality is that we are all together, united, and unclassifiable.

The issue of abuse intrinsic to the creation and enforcement of current immigration policies is not just a national problem, but is a local issue in so many ways. Our communities are shaped by those who comprise them and strengthened by the complexity that comes with diversity. Therefore, we as a society experience only detriment when our brothers and sisters are silenced. But there are other, more tangible forms of an increasingly militarized, oppressive presence within our immediate community here in the Pacific Northwest.

> Borders and walls serve only to keep us apart, compartmentalize, and classify us, when the reality is that we are all together, united, and unclassifiable.

The Northwest Detention Center

Just 30 miles north of Washington State's capital, near the Port of Tacoma, is the Northwest Detention Center. Run by a corporation called the GEO Group, the prison is contracted through the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) branch of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The GEO Group runs 45 other prisons, correctional facilities, and detention centers in North America, including the Migrant Operations Center at Guantanamo Bay.

Essentially a minimum/medium security prison, the Center exists to conduct "Detention and Removal Operations," meaning the incarceration and deportation of migrants apprehended in Washington, Oregon, and Alaska. To make an inhospitable building even more dismal, the prison stands on a former Superfund site known as the Tacoma Tar Pits. Most who are held at the Tacoma facility, as with similar Detention Centers around the country, have done nothing other than subject themselves to the dangers of crossing national borders in hopes of a better existence.

While their "crime" is minor, migrant detainees are not treated as human beings. Within Detention Centers neglect is common – basic medical necessities denied, mass food poisonings, etc.—and constitutional rights do not exist, including the right to legal representation. And these examples only touch the surface of the deep injustices that are present within such detention facilities. In fact, 90% of detainee cases are denied the right to due process.

The lack of basic rights for migrant detainees highlights the racist policies surrounding human rights in the United States: US. citizens are afforded privileges—although these are also under attack—that

▸ **BRIDGES** continued on page 8

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Works In Progress is a free, volunteer-operated progressive community newspaper based in Olympia, Washington. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of *Works In Progress* and are solely those of the authors.

Submissions
Please send text as Word attachments. Artwork and photos can be sent electronically or we can scan them for you as camera-ready/black & white.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number.

Articles may be reprinted. Please cite source.

If you don't see your issue being covered in Works In Progress*, it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or aren't finding someone else to cover it!)*

Send submissions to *submissions@olywip.org* or mail to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295.

Governing Tool
The following statement is part of the Editorial Policy and is the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause:

WIP *will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by* WIP *to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but* WIP *reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

Mission Statement
"Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. *Works In Progress* is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

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Anti-Discrimination Clause
We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

Back Issues
Some back issues are available in the Timberland Library system. *WIP* is being archived on microfilm by the UW Library.

Welcome to the jungle. We've got fun and games. But we're missing pages 9–12 (and a cover) and could greatly use donationios to help recover them. Look below for how to help us out. Thanks.

WIP Schedule

Submission Deadline:
April 25

PO Box 295 • Olympia WA 98507
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NOT AS MANY ANNOUNCEMENTS AS LAST MONTH. GOLLY, THERE SURE WERE A LOT LAST MONTH.

Community Youth Services hiring
Are you looking for full-time entry-level social service work?

The Community Youth Services' AmeriCorps programs are hiring over 70 members to serve in Thurston County Non-Profits and Elementary schools in six Western Washington counties. Positions start in August or September and last for 10 months to a year. Program benefits include a monthly living stipend, basic health care, student loan forbearance, frequent trainings and a $4,725 Education award upon completion of service. For more information or to apply call Allen Stanton at 943-0780 x161 or e-mail astanton@communityyouthservices.org

Stonewall Youth Drag Show
Saturday, March 29, 7:30 p.m., Capitol Theater, Olympia

The Drag Show will be performed at the Capitol Theater on March 29 at 7:30pm. Doors open at 7 pm. $10 for adults, $8 for youth and no one turned away for lack of funds.

Better Neighbors: A New Way Forward for North America
Wednesday, April 2, 7-9 p.m. at Traditions Cafe in downtown Olympia.

The Alliance for Democracy and Global Exchange bring you a panel of experts to present a critical look at the so-called "Security and Prosperity Partnership" of North America (or SPP). The SPP will affect many aspects of our lives. Yet, it is being orchestrated without public or congressional scrutiny. Join the Alliance and Global Exchange to learn more about the SPP's wide-ranging impacts. To learn more visit www.SoundDemocracy.org or call (360) 915-9257.

Film and Discussion about Columbia/ Venezuela/FARC
Wednesday, April 2, 7 p.m. at Media Island 816 Adams St. SE Olympia (across from the Downtown Library)

Film Synopsis: With most of US military aid under the so-called "Plan Colombia"delivered, Pres. Pastrana unilaterally withdraws from the peace process engaged with the FARC guerilla (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and steps up violence in this 50 year-quasi-civil war. But what is left of the initial anti-narcotics purpose of the US "Plan Colombia"? After 20 years of drug-wars in the Andes resulting in a two-fold increase of cocaine import in the US in the last ten years alone, what is to be expected from a plan focusing primarily on spraying coca-fields in rebel-held parts of the country when coca is grown all over Colombia ? Is the US Government even concerned still with fighting drugs when the post 9-11 rhetoric made it easy for the State Dep. to now single out the leftist FARC as the enemy # 1 in Colombia on the ground that they use what might be viewed as "terrorist tactics"?

Free School Workshop: Your #1 Asset: How to Create the Health You Need to Live a Successful Life
Thursday, April 3, Fertile Ground Studio, 311 9th Avenue SE, Olympia

When you look and feel awesome, your life is awesome! When you have energy all day long, you get things done faster and get to spend time doing the things you love. Class is limited to 20 students. Please register by contacting communitykitchen@freeschoolcommunity.org

Facilitator: Summer Bock

Bowling with POWER
Monday, April 7, 5:30 p.m. First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way SE, Olympia

Come bowling with Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights (POWER) on Monday, April 7th. Meet for a potluck at 5:30 at the First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way SE, at 6:30 we'll carpool to the Westside Lanes, 2200 Garfield Ave NW. If coming directly to Westside Lanes, join us at 6:45. Shoe rentals cost $2, a game $3. POWER will help with costs for members who can't afford it. Call POWER if you need a ride to the potluck or the lanes.

POWER, Parents Organizing For Welfare and Economic Rights, 701 Franklin Street SE Olympia, WA 98501, 360-352-9716 toll free 866-343-9716, welfarerights@riseup.net http://www.oly-wa.us/power/

Climate Change: Past, Present, Future by Earth Scientist Pat Pringle
Wednesday, April 9, 7- 9 p.m. at Traditions Café, 300—5th Ave. This event is co-sponsored by Earth Care Catholics and the Interfaith Works Earth Stewardship Committee.

All events are free. (Donations accepted)

Pat Pringle is an Earth Scientist and volcanologist who worked as a Cascades Geologist at Mt. St. Helens and elsewhere for many years. He is an expert on volcanic processes. He has been teaching Environmental Studies and Geology at Centralia College for the past three years, somehow managing to complete his book on Mt. Rainier at the same time. Pat is on the Centralia College Sustainability Committee and was quite involved with the recent Focus the Nation activities in Olympia.

Green Party of South Puget Sound Second Quarterly Meeting "Take It To The Community"
Saturday, April 12—MIXX96 Meeting Room (Washington & State Streets, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Breakfast Included

This second quarterly meeting will focus on Green service to the community. We will find uniquely Green ways of serving, demonstrating that the Green vision is comprehensive and tied to the values of the citizens. Some ideas that have been floated: a "buy local" initiative which would find ways of letting consumers know which grocery store produce is local, and perhaps letting backyard gardeners share their produce . . . an "energy consultant" program which would help homeowners make sense of all the various kinds of advice they are offered, and aid them as they try to prioritize the steps towards minimizing their carbon footprint.

Or perhaps you have your own idea for a service we need but no one has thought of yet. Bring your ideas to our meeting. Knowledgeable people will be on hand to advise us. Members and non-members all welcome.

Free School Workshop: Healthy Traveling
Monday, April 14, 7 p.m., Fertile Ground Guesthouse, 311 9th Avenue SE, Olympia

If you are planning a vacation this season, it is important to maintain your health on the trip. In this class you will learn tips for successful flying, how to decide which foods and supplements to bring, and where to find nutritious foods at your destination. Make plans for your healthy journey, because vacations should not be a time to get sick. Special emphasis will be on Southeast Asia and Europe. To register contact communitykitchen@freeschoolcommunity.org
Facilitator: Ava Waits

War Tax Resistance Day
Tuesday, April 15, 4 p.m., Olympia Main Post Office on Jefferson Street

Come join a throng of other voices for sane spending. Bring a sign and help us hand out depressing information about the government's self-destructive military spending policies. Folks will gather at 4 p.m. in front of the main post office on Jefferson Street. We'll stay through the rush hour, till about 6:30 p.m. For further information, go take a look at: www.nwtrcc.org

Thurston-Santo Tomás Sister County Association Mt. Rainier Trip
April 27th (weather permitting): Come with us to the mountain! We'll be heading up to Mount Rainier for a day of wonder, snow and sledding. We plan to leave Olympia at 8:30 a.m. Call by April 20 to reserve space: 943-8642.

Carbon Footprints: Olympia and Santo Tomas, Nicaragua
Thursday, May 8, 6 p.m. at Traditions Café, 300 5th Ave SW Olympia

Explore climate change and sustainability issues with delegates from Nicaragua. Join the Mother's Day 1Sky call for bold solutions to combat climate change. Great family event! For more information: Beth Doglio (360) 570-8804

Velma Stewart: A mother's story about recruitment

by Janet Blanding

Velma Stewart's 20-year-old son has asthma, attention deficit disorder, and he's color-blind. But the Army wants to send him to Iraq anyway. As the unpopular illegal occupation of Iraq drags on, enlistment has slacked off, and military recruiters have had to resort to unsavory tactics to fill the ranks. The military now grants "moral waivers" for past felonies which once would have precluded an individual from military service, and medical conditions that formerly disqualified potential recruits may no longer do so. Standards about some conditions have been relaxed, and in other instances, young people are being encouraged by recruiters to hide facts that might exclude them from military service.

A disabled Army veteran herself, Velma Stewart is familiar with the system, armed with suspicion, and ready to fight for her family. When recruiters started pushing hard on her son, she pushed back. In a recent phone interview, she told me her story. Her son's childhood was difficult, but not unusual – an absent father, money problems, medical issues. The Tacoma resident did her best in difficult circumstances.

"My son and I have suffered. I was going to church, trying to do what was right, but I had some issues. Still, I stuck by my son." As a student, her son played on the golf team. He's a gifted singer and actor, who also plays the drums. But he has had major health issues: He has suffered from asthma since birth.

"Later he was diagnosed with ADHD (Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder). From the fifth grade on, he had a lot of issues. Until he graduated from high school, there were a lot of accommodations made for him, to help him get through school." After graduating in 2005, he got a job, but later he was laid off, probably because of issues related to the ADHD.

Velma's son began attending Tacoma Community College while living with her at home. But the situation was strained. Money was tight, and it cost $400 a month just for their car insurance. Velma's son wanted more independence, but Velma says that her presence helped him cope with his ADHD. "Living with me, I was able to keep him on track. Do this, do that, let's go to church." In January 2007, looking for more independence, he went to live with his father, with whom he had recently become re-acquainted. By the end of March, he was enlisted in the military, with his father's blessing.

"In spring of 2007," Velma relates, "my son and I went out to eat for Easter, and he told me he was thinking about the military." He told his mother the recruiter told him he probably wouldn't go to Iraq because he was color blind. Velma, whose own military experience made her wary, tried to talk him out of it. "I was in the Army," Velma said, "and they lied to me. They told me I was going to be stationed in a beautiful place, and the barracks were going to be like apartments. When I got there, Fort Lewis, hundreds of women lived in an open area that was separated by shower curtains. It was called an 'open bay.'"

> For Velma, the bottom line is that her son is technically not eligible to be in the military, and the recruiters used unscrupulous techniques to get him to enlist anyway.

Velma shared her suspicions about the Army with her son, and persuaded him to opt out.

"On April 10, 2007, he and I went down to the South Hill recruiting station in Puyallup, and he signed a "decline to enlist" form. I talked to the recruiter, and the recruiter said he could opt out. At that time, the recruiter denied that he had said Velma's son probably wouldn't go to Iraq. "I turned to my son and said 'see?'"

At that point, according to Velma, she "talked to the recruiter, and the recruiter said he could opt out. He told me it was a delayed enlistment program." Disturbed to see how determined the recruiter was to ensnare her son in the military, Velma alerted the recruiter to her son's medical conditions.

"I told the recruiter my son has ADHD and asthma, and they're not supposed to be eligible for enlistment."

Although the Army lowered enlistment standards with reference to both asthma and ADHD in 2004, in response to its inability to enroll sufficient personnel, people with asthma persisting after the age of 13 are still excluded, unless a waiver is obtained. With regard to ADHD, standards were substantially lowered in 2004; where previously it was very difficult to enlist if there was any history of ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) or ADHD, now recruits are acceptable as long as they have not been treated for either of these conditions within the last year. In the case of Velma's son, however, both conditions were still present. Her son signed the "decline to enlist" papers at that point, Velma obtained a copy, and she thought he was safe.

This visit to the recruitment center was not the end, however. As he struggled to live independently and to establish his own identity, Velma's then 19-year-old son was sometimes uncommunicative about what was going on in his life. Later she found out that he had changed his mind yet again and was enlisted. Velma received a letter from him explaining that, upon the recruiter's advice, he had denied having asthma so that the Army would take him.

"They ended up convincing my son to not divulge the information. I feel that is wrong. "

Velma attempted to intervene, to make the military aware of her son's medical conditions, and perhaps obtain a medical discharge for him. She contacted MEPS (Military Entrance Processing Station) in Seattle, as well as Maria Cantwell's office, but the results weren't satisfactory.

"When I found out that my son was actually going to be enlisted, I contacted the military enlistment personnel in Seattle. They referred me back to his recruiter. So I faxed a letter of complaint to the recruiting office here. They then referred me to the recruiting command in Kentucky." Velma never received a written response from anyone she contacted.

"They just kind of passed the buck on each other." As for Maria Cantwell, Velma received a form letter. It referenced her "letter regarding military recruiter inquiry – not recruiter misconduct inquiry. I also asked for a meeting with her, as a constituent. Let's see if I get a meeting or not."

With her son now stationed at Fort Lewis and on the list for deployment to Iraq, Velma's relationship to him is strained. She hasn't spoken to him in weeks and she is unsure whether he really wants to be in the military or not. "He implied directly to me, and in letters, that he wanted to get out." But at other times, he presents a different story. "He did change his story. He was probably intimidated. He was afraid of some sort of disciplinary action, possibly including a dishonorable discharge. Once you get a dishonorable discharge, it can affect your entire life. It can affect your future."

She also believes that the military is exploiting the family discord.

"They know that some of these young people are coming under duress. They know about the family problems. My son wrote to me in a letter that 'the recruiter knew I was mad at you, Mom.'"

"As far as I'm concerned, the recruiter helped my son falsify his enlistment. My son should not be threatened with anything other than a medical or honorable discharge. "

Despite the current strain in their relationship, Velma doesn't want to lose her son, and she is afraid of how conditions in Iraq may affect his asthma. For Velma, the bottom line is that her son is technically not eligible to be in the military, and the recruiters used unscrupulous techniques to get him to enlist anyway. "They told him not to put down all his pre-existing medical stuff, which acknowledges that there is a fault. They are allowing young people to go in under fraudulent conditions. These recruiters are like the worst kind of salesmen. We have a lemon law, but we don't have a law against unethical recruitment practices and tactics."

Janet Blanding is a frequent contributor to *Works In Progress*.

Tacoma jury unjustly convicts Briana Waters of arson

by Olympia Civil Liberties Resource

A federal jury was unable to reach a decision on conspiracy and transportation of a destructive device but convicted Briana Waters, a 32-year-old mother and violin teacher and former resident of Olympia of arson. The government charged her with being a lookout in connection with the May 2001 arson of the Center for Urban Horticulture at the University of Washington in Seattle. If convicted on all counts, Waters would have faced a sentence of 35 years. The two informants who testified against her in the case, who admitted to participating in the arson, face between three and seven years. Ms. Waters' sentencing is set for May 30.

Without any physical evidence linking Ms. Waters directly to the arson, the government built its case on the testimony of the two informants, and a number of pieces of circumstantial evidence. The defense argued that the informants falsely accused Waters in order to avoid 35-year prison sentences themselves, and that their testimony was demonstrably false.

Among the pieces of circumstantial evidence introduced by the government was a folder with a note on the cover from Waters to one of the informants, Jennifer Kolar, containing various radical pamphlets and publications. Prosecutors highlighted the most sensationalist passages in the articles, and sought to ascribe these views to Ms. Waters. Waters testified that she did not write the materials, did not agree with them, and did not pass them to Kolar. The defense argued that the informant must have substituted other articles for the ones that Waters actually put in the folder. While Waters' fingerprints were on the folder, they were not on any of the articles. The government countered that Waters' boyfriend's fingerprints were on the articles, and that he is a "fugitive" suspected of one or more arsons. The defense pointed out that the boyfriend is not on trial.

"The government's case was primarily based on character assassination and guilt by association," said civil rights attorney Ben Rosenfeld, a member of the Board of Directors of the Civil Liberties Defense Center. "Evidence of other people's writings never should never have been allowed to be used against her."

Briana Waters has maintained her innocence to all the charges. An appeal is likely.

This trial is another chapter in the federal government's "Operation Backfire," also dubbed the "Green Scare," in which the government has hounded the environmental activist community, overcharged a number of individuals with a federal firearms enhancement applying to bombs and missiles, and branded them as terrorists, even though none of the events resulted in a single injury.

Briana Waters has steadfastly maintained her innocence. The moral support that we can give right now is invaluable. The address is:

Briana Waters
36432-086
FDC – Seatac
Federal Detention Center
P.O. Box 13900
Seattle, WA 98198

If you can, donate through Briana's website: *www.supportbriana.org* .

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Nicaraguan delegation to visit, present in Olympia

by Grace Cox

Simón Bolívar, Ernesto Che Guevara, Augusto Cesar Sandino are but three of the revolutionary heroes of Latin America who held one belief in common – that the people of Latin America are one people. Unity of Latin America, from the southwestern United States to Tierra del Fuego, is the foundation upon which can be built self-determination and freedom from European and US imperialism. Hundreds of years of foreign exploitation, military intervention, revolution and counter-revolution make the statement, "these are tumultuous times in Latin America" a tautology.

While the US is militarily overextended invading and occupying the Middle East, and the myth of the US free democratic election system is exposed for the fraud that it is, Latin Americans are turning out in droves to elect progressive leaders that stand for independence and solidarity. Evo Morales, Hugo Chavez, and Daniel Ortega, with the support of Fidel & Raul Castro, are leading Latin America in the development of ALBA, the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas. In direct opposition to free trade agreements that protect US economic domination and global capitalism, ALBA represents economic self-determination. At the ALBA summit in Caracas January 25–26 of this year, ALBA members announced the creation of a regional development bank intended to strengthen their alliance and promote independence from US-backed lenders like the World Bank.

Last July, while in Nicaragua to celebrate the 26th Anniversary of the liberation of Nicaragua from the Somoza family dictatorship, Hugo Chavez broke ground on the first of three new power plants to help reduce the electrical crisis that has plagued Nicaragua for more than a year. This kind of aid, without the strings of structural adjustment attached to aid from the World Bank and the IDB (Inter-American Development Bank), is exactly the kind of international support Nicaragua needs to begin to take small steps out of poverty, hunger and illiteracy.

Bringing it Home

Here in the US we must embrace the task of building solidarity with Latin America. Turning the spotlight on US intervention, including propaganda designed to terrorize the people of Latin America, we have to hold on to the reality that we have more in common with each other, across all borders, than we'll ever have with William Walker, Teddy Roosevelt (or Franklin, for that matter), Ronald Reagan or either of the George Bushes.

In direct opposition to free trade agreements that protect US economic domination and global capitalism, ALBA represents economic self-determination.

For over 18 years, **Thurston-Santo Tomás Sister County Association** (TSTSCA)has worked for the mutual benefit of Santo Tomás, Chontales, Nicaragua, and Olympia. We work directly with the Committee for Community Development, a non-profit organization that sponsors the Children's Free Lunch Program, the People's Clinic, a farm, a night school, a library and a newly launched economic project designed to provide small development loans and education for small cattle farms. TSTSCA supports a sister school relationship between Lincoln Elementary and Escuela Rubén Darío. TSTSCA also sponsors delegations to and from Santo Tomás; more than 100 people from all walks of life in Olympia have lived and worked in Santo Tomás, while more than 20 Tomasinos have visited Olympia.

Grace Cox has worked with TSTSCA for 8 years and has visited Santo Tomás 5 times.

Getting to know the delegates

TSTSCA is thrilled to announce our upcoming ninth delegation to Olympia from Santo Tomás, Chontales, Nicaragua. Visiting from April 23-May 13, our four delegates will make several public appearances in the Olympia area as well as working with various projects to share expertise and experiences.

Griselda Escobar is the principal of Rubén Dario Elementary School. She is an advocate for children and serves on the City Council Commission for the Rights of Children. While in Olympia Griselda will be working with the faculty and students of Lincoln Elementary School as well as visiting Roosevelt Elementary to support the development of a new sister school relationship.

Bernys Sanchez is currently employed as a Literacy Program Coordinator for the Ministry of Education in Chontales. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Committee for Community Development and has served as an electoral technician in each of Nicaragua's elections since 2000. He owns a sound productions business (Disco Movíl) and is an accomplished D.J. See below for opportunities to dance to Bernys' music! Additionally, Bernys will be visiting various literacy programs in the region.

Gladys Prieto is a retired nurse and health care administrator. She has served in many capacities with the CDC, and currently is the Coordinator of the Economic Project, working with small farmers and producers. She also serves on the Water Commission for the municipality of Santo Tomás. Gladys will be visiting a number of social projects in Western Washington and working with the state Department of Agriculture Organic Certification Program.

Wilfredo Lazo is a university professor in language, literature and history. He is a published author and poet. His personal pursuits include an environmental awareness program for youth to encourage pride in their history and culture. He is also working to encourage Santo Tomás to build a museum to preserve the many indigenous artifacts he has found hiking in the Chontales region. Wilfredo will be presenting a poetry reading (see below) and working with at-risk youth while in Olympia.

Join the delegates

TSTSCA has a number of opportunities for you to meet the delegates.

Monday, May 5: Poetry and more! We'll be joining with Artists Look South, a project of Olympia area artists, to enjoy an evening of poetry by Wilfredo Lazo. (7:00 p.m., donations welcome.) In the Mixx 96 meeting room on the corner of State and Washington in downtown Olympia.

Thursday, May 8: Carbon Footprints: Olympia & Santo Tomás, Nicaragua – 6 PM, Traditions Café. Explore climate change and sustainability issues with Climate Solutions and the delegates from Nicaragua. Join the Mother's Day 1Sky call for bold solutions to combat climate change. Great family event! For more information call Beth Doglio (360) 570-8804.

Saturday, May 10: Join DJ Bernys & Oly's own DJ Dalya for Baile Eclectica, a night of Latin dancing. Join us at 7:30 PM for salsa and meringue lessons, followed at 9 by the opportunity to show off what you've learned, or develop your own freestyle dance. In the old K Records space across from Fish Brew Pub, enter on Cherry Street. $10 with lessons, $7 from 9 on.

We are also planning a fabulous Nica-style dinner the weekend of May 2–4. Watch for more information!

For other opportunities to connect with our delegates:

April 26: Join us for the Procession of the Species. We'll be camped out on Capitol Way on the Sylvester Park side. We'll be with the people wearing heavy coats and blankets!

April 27 (weather permitting): Come with us to the mountain! We'll be heading up to Mount Rainier for a day of wonder, snow and sledding. We plan to leave Olympia at 8:30 am. Call by April 20 to reserve space: 943-8642.

Founder of "School of the Americas Watch" speaks in Olympia

They tell us they're teaching democracy. We say, "How do you teach democracy through the barrel of a gun?"
—Father Roy Bourgeois

Father Bourgeois is the driving force behind the movement to close the School of the Americas. **Veterans for Peace 109 Rachel Corrie Chapter** is sponsoring four opportunities to hear Father Roy Bourgeois speak on April 10:

NOON: *South Puget Sound Community College*
2 PM: *The Evergreen State College*
5 PM: *Pizza dinner at Apollo's (2010 Harrison Ave NW)*
7 PM: *Presentation at Traditions Cafe (300 5th Ave SW)*

For the day's schedule, go to *www.doodle.ch/i6wnz7chuwfhfe3g*

About the School of the Americas (*from the School of the Americas Watch website, www.soaw.org*)

The US Army School of the Americas (SOA), based in Fort Benning, Georgia, trains Latin American security personnel in combat, counter-insurgency and counter-narcotics. SOA graduates are responsible for some of the worst human rights abuses in Latin America. In 1996 the Pentagon was forced to release training manuals used at the school that advocated torture, extortion and execution. Among the SOA's nearly 60,000 graduates are notorious dictators Manuel Noriega and Omar Torrijos of Panama, Leopoldo Galtieri and Roberto Viola of Argentina, Juan Velasco Alvarado of Peru, Guillermo Rodriguez of Ecuador, and Hugo Banzer Suarez of Bolivia. Lower-level SOA graduates have participated in human rights abuses that include the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero and the El Mozote massacre of 900 civilians.

In an attempt to deflect public criticism and disassociate the school from its dubious reputation, the SOA was renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) in 2001. The name change was a result of a Department of Defense proprosal included in the Defense Authorization Bill for Fiscal 2001, at a time when SOA opponents were poised to win a congressional vote on legislation that would have dismantled the school. The name-change measure passed when the House of Representatives defeated a bi-partisan amendment to close the SOA and conduct a congressional investigation by a narrow ten-vote margin.

Each year the school trains hundreds of soldiers from Latin America in combat skills—all paid for by US taxpayers.

About Father Roy Bourgeois

Fr. Roy Bourgeois was born in Lutcher, Louisiana in 1938. He graduated from the University of Southwestern Louisiana with a Bachelor of Science degree in geology.

After college Fr. Roy served as a Naval Officer for four years—two years at sea, one year at a NATO station in Europe, and one year of shore duty in Vietnam. He received the Purple Heart.

After military service, Fr. Roy entered the seminary of the Maryknoll Missionary Order. He was ordained a Catholic priest in 1972, and he went on to work with the poor of Bolivia for five years before being arrested and forced to leave the country, then under the repressive rule of dictator General Hugo Banzer.

In 1980 Fr. Roy became involved in issues surrounding US policy in El Salvador after four US churchwomen—two of them his friends—were raped and killed by Salvadoran soldiers. Fr. Roy became an outspoken critic of US foreign policy in Latin America. Since then, he has spent over four years in US federal prisons for nonviolent protests against the training of Latin American soldiers at the SOA in Ft. Benning, Georgia.

In 1990, Roy founded the School of the Americas Watch, which does research on the US Army School of the Americas, now WHINSEC, at Fort Benning, Georgia. Each year the school trains hundreds of soldiers from Latin America in combat skills—all paid for by US taxpayers.

The School of the Americas Watch, located just outside the main entrance of Fort Benning and in Washington, DC, informs the general public, Congress and the media about the implications of this training on the people of Latin America. Each November, tens of thousands of people converge on Fort Benning to demand closure of the school.

Father Bourgeois at School of Americas demonstration. From www.

Fr. Roy has worked on and helped produce several documentary films, including 1983's *Gods of Metal*, about the nuclear arms race, and 1995's *School of Assassins*. Both films received Academy Award nominations.

Fr. Roy was the recipient of the 1997 Pax Christi USA Teacher of Peace Award.

Queer Theater Magic 2008

by Finn Cottom

Stonewall Youth is a queer organization in Olympia that serves Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer and Questioning youth that are under 21. Stonewall Youth is named after the famous Stonewall Riots in New York City in 1969 in which mainly Black and Latino drag queens resisted a police raid at the Stonewall Inn. The Stonewall Rebellion is seen as a turning point in history marking the visibility and power of queers combating homophobia.

Stonewall has been performing a drag show for nearly 10 years and it has become an Olympia cult classic. Hundreds of people have gathered to watch this queer talent show. Starting last year it was transformed into a theater showcase filled with different acts centered on a major theme and plot. Under the directorship of multi-talented Nomy Lamm, the youth contributed to the script and brought their amazing dancing, singing, acting, and spoken word to the stage. The audience was filled with laughter and tears as we watched this wonderful moment in time as the seats were filled in a kaleidoscope of genders while we all created a space of transformation. Homo4 news and Box news showed us their differing ideas about homosexuality. And of course a surprising love story was woven in along with organizations such as Oasis from Tacoma and Seattle Young People's Project showing off their stellar performance skills.

When I was asked to think about co-directing the drag show, I knew I couldn't pass up an opportunity to be part of a homegrown community event that is always glorious. I grew up in a small town in Ohio where, as a queer youth, I was given no help or assistance in surviving the extreme homophobia that I experienced. Seeing the drag show made visible the kind of environment I'd always wanted. It is an honor to be part of youth having resources while homophobia, ageism and the other oppressions they deal with are alive and well.

As we work on developing a dance routine the youth are laughing and throwing out dance move suggestions. Katrina, our dance coach and Stonewall Staff, helps us all stay on track while we shimmy like fish and flap like birds. Although some of us think these moves are overly campy Mykey, my co-director exclaims, "We're all about camp! This is campy! And that's great!"

It was just another of those moments when we all are trying to not take this project too seriously. It can be hard considering we've been working for three months on developing a performance that touches on a myriad of tough issues. We hear about the situations youth return to each night. Along with making it to rehearsals and shining their creative light in developing the script, acting out scenes, working on dance numbers, and developing their own individual acts, the youth are also coping with their own lives. Some youth are homeless, are not out to their parents, or are struggling with addiction.

I, as a queer adult, am often frustrated that we cannot offer a complete sanctuary from the difficult injustices the youth experience. They can have queer space here, even just for a few nights a week. Behind the scenes of that theater magic we strive for, we are building community, memories and laughter. It is not often that a space in which your young, queer, gorgeous dreams can become reality in front of hundreds of people. Our performance will be about two hours long. For one night only. It's clearly not just about the end product, because before we know it, we know each other well. We can each find our unique voices and opinions and when the curtain is opened the shame we're made to carry will be shed. We are told to hide in the backstage forever, amongst the abandoned dusty costumes and chipping black paint. This is not to be our fate when so much glitter, mustaches and singing await us. When dance routines and spoken word are to be composed of our hopes in the wind. When the tenacity of human relationships have so much wisdom to offer us as we make our way through navigating a world that would rather have us silenced.

The performance that we have developed this year is about an isolated queer youth who is hiding hir sexuality and is harassed at school. We follow hir through a high school day with Political Science addressing the upcoming presidential election, Sex Ed courtesy of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a locker room scene, a lunchroom dance off between different cliques and detention. There are a variety of dances, songs, and spoken word. Part of the plot is the appearance of Super Queeroes, who are gay super heroes that magically confront homophobia. The main character ends up finding queer community where ze can feel at home, but not without a struggle, or without glitter. We hope the young queers in the audience see Stonewall as a place they can go and that we can do some consciousness raising around issues affecting the LGBTIQQ community.

The youth have taken initiative in producing this theater piece. These queer youth show guts on stage to bring their own lives and ideas to the spotlight. They claim their own truth and offer a gift to us in getting to witness such deep expression.

We have also been interacting with many members of the queer community and allies that have graciously helped us with different aspects of this huge project. It has certainly made us aware of the network that is available and powerful in what we can do together.

Even if you miss the performance this year, stay aware for next year because queer youth hold the truth of these strange times we're living in. We as adults need to show up in the ways youth request because honestly, we need each other. Homophobia is life threatening, as the statistics of suicide, drug use, and smoking show us. And don't forget physical and sexual assault that are so often silenced. If you, like me, grew up in silence, shame, and fighting back when you could, we can now be part of lifting that load the way it should've been lifted for us

If you are a youth, come to Stonewall if you can. These days Stonewall offers a book club, a Wednesday night support group, art therapy, and the Speaker's Bureau, in which youth speak out against homophobia at schools and other public places. Stonewall also has a gay camp retreat every winter and starting last year, a summer camp focused on training for activism. We have fundraisers such as the auction at the Eagle's Hall in the fall and the Bowl-a-thon coming up in the spring. Everything is free for youth! We are looking for volunteers and board members too. Visit www.stonewallyouth.org for more details. Call (360) 705-2738 or e-mail stonewallyouth@qwest.net. Snail mail goes to P.O. Box 7383 Olympia, WA 98507.

Finn Cottom is a local musician, activist, spoken word artist, and zine writer. Finn works at Bread and Roses Advocacy Center. Finn is an Evergreen student and looks forward to building more Queer People of Color, Jewish, and Romani community and traveling the world. For zines, music, or sharing interests contact originalfinn@gmail.com.

Community guide for LGBTIQQ Youth

Oasis is an awesome drop in center in Tacoma for LGBTIQQ youth ages 14-24. More information is available at www.oasisyouthcenter.org.

The Seattle Young People's Project is a youth led adult supported organization that empowers youth and is up to all sorts of great projects. More information at www.sypp.org.

The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence are a Seattle-based abbey of queer nuns taking down the system of guilt and shame and promoting safe sex. You got to see it to really appreciate it. See for yourself at www.theabbey.org.

Queer: A contested term in our community, reclaimed by some of us starting in the 1980's to define ourselves outside of any attempt at a box and defy it as a homophobic insult.

Homophobia: discrimination based on the fact or perceived idea that someone is homosexual.

Classism: discrimination based on a working class or poor person's economic status.

Ableism: discrimination against people with disabilities.

Transphobia: discrimination against people who are transgender, transsexual, Intersex, or gender queer.

Visit ***http://www.gendertalk.com/info/resource/index.shtml*** for more information regarding people who are affected by transphobia.

This drawing was composed by Finn Cottom and Mykey Arthrell. Photo by Mykey Arthrell.

WHO SHOULD OBAMA APOLOGIZE FOR NEXT—ROSA PARKS?

Of national lies and racial amnesia

by Tim Wise

For most white folks, indignation just doesn't wear well. Once affected or conjured up, it reminds one of a pudgy man, wearing a tie that may well have fit him when he was fifty pounds lighter, but which now cuts off somewhere above his navel and makes him look like an idiot.

Indignation doesn't work for most whites, because having remained sanguine about, silent during, indeed often *supportive* of so much injustice over the years in this country—the theft of native land and genocide of indigenous persons, and the enslavement of Africans being only two of the best examples—we are just a bit late to get into the game of moral rectitude. And once we enter it, our efforts at righteousness tend to fail the test of sincerity.

But here we are, in 2008, fuming at the words of Pastor Jeremiah Wright, of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago—occasionally Barack Obama's pastor, and the man whom Obama credits with having brought him to Christianity—for merely reminding us of those evils about which we have remained so quiet, so dismissive, so unconcerned. It is not the crime that bothers us, but the remembrance of it, the unwillingness to *let it go*—these last words being the first ones uttered by most whites it seems whenever anyone, least of all an "angry black man" like Jeremiah Wright, foists upon us the bill of particulars for several centuries of white supremacy.

But our collective indignation, no matter how loudly we announce it, cannot drown out the truth. And as much as white America may not be able to hear it (and as much as politics may require Obama to condemn it) let us be clear, Jeremiah Wright fundamentally told the truth.

Oh I know that for some such a comment will seem shocking. After all, didn't he say that America "got what it deserved" on 9/11? And didn't he say that black people should be singing "God Damn America" because of its treatment of the African American community throughout the years?

Well actually, no he didn't.

Wright said not that the attacks of September 11th were justified, but that they were, in effect, *predictable*. Deploying the imagery of chickens coming home to roost is not to give thanks for the return of the poultry or to endorse such feathered homecoming as a positive good; rather, it is merely to note two things: first, that what goes around, indeed, comes around—a notion with longstanding theological grounding—and secondly, that the US has indeed engaged in more than enough violence against innocent people to make it just a tad bit hypocritical for us to then evince shock and outrage about an attack on ourselves, as if the latter were unprecedented.

He noted that we killed far more people, far more innocent civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki than were killed on 9/11 and "never batted an eye." That this statement is true is inarguable, at least amongst sane people. He is correct on the math, he is correct on the innocence of the dead (neither city was a military target), and he is most definitely correct on the lack of remorse or even self-doubt about the act: sixty-plus years later most Americans still believe those attacks were justified, that they were needed to end the war and "save American lives."

But not only does such a calculus suggest that American lives are inherently worth more than the lives of Japanese civilians (or, one supposes, Vietnamese, Iraqi or Afghan civilians too), but it also ignores the long-declassified documents, and President Truman's own war diaries, all of which indicate clearly that Japan had already signaled its desire to end the war, and that we knew they were going to surrender, even without the dropping of atomic weapons. The conclusion to which these truths then attest is simple, both in its basic veracity and it monstrousness: namely, that in those places we committed premeditated and deliberate mass murder, with no justification *whatsoever*; and yet for saying *that* I will receive more hate mail, more hostility, more dismissive and contemptuous responses than will those who suggest that no body count is too high when we're the ones doing the killing. Jeremiah Wright becomes a pariah, because, you see, we much prefer the logic of George Bush the First, who once said that as President he would "never apologize for the United States of America. I don't care what the facts are."

As much as white America may not be able to hear it (and as much as politics may require Obama to condemn it) let us be clear, Jeremiah Wright fundamentally told the truth.

And Wright didn't say blacks should be singing "God Damn America." He was suggesting that blacks owe little moral allegiance to a nation that has treated so many of them for so long as animals, as persons undeserving of dignity and respect, and which even now locks up hundreds of thousands of non-violent offenders (especially for drug possession), even while whites who do the same crimes (and according to the data, when it comes to drugs, more often in fact), are walking around free. His reference to God in that sermon was more about what God *will* do to such a nation, than it was about what should or shouldn't happen. It was a comment derived from, and fully in keeping with, the black prophetic tradition, and although one can surely disagree with the theology (I do, actually, and don't believe that any God either blesses or condemns nation states for their actions), the statement itself was no call for blacks to turn on America. If anything, it was a demand that America *earn* the respect of black people, something the evidence and history suggests it has yet to do.

The statement itself was no call for blacks to turn on America. If anything, it was a demand that America *earn* the respect of black people, something the evidence and history suggests it has yet to do.

Finally, although one can certainly disagree with Wright about his suggestion that the government created AIDS to get rid of black folks—and I do, for instance—it is worth pointing out that Wright isn't the only one who has said this. In fact, none other than Bill Cosby (oh yes, *that* Bill Cosby, the one white folks love because of his recent moral crusade against the black poor) proffered his belief in the very same thing back in the early '90s in an interview on CNN, when he said that AIDS may well have been created to get rid of people whom the government deemed "undesirable" including gays and racial minorities.

So that's the truth of the matter: Wright made one comment that is highly arguable, but which has also been voiced by white America's favorite black man, another that was horribly misinterpreted and stripped of all context, and then another that was demonstrably accurate. And for this, he is pilloried and made into a virtual enemy of the state; for this, Barack Obama may lose the support of just enough white folks to cost him the Democratic nomination, and/or the Presidency; all of it, because Jeremiah Wright, unlike most preachers opted for truth. If he had been one of those "prosperity ministers" who says Jesus wants nothing so much as for you to be rich, like Joel Osteen, that would have been fine. Had he been a retread bigot like Falwell was, or Pat Robertson is, he might have been criticized, but he would have remained in good standing and surely not have damaged a Presidential candidate in this way. But unlike Osteen, and Falwell, and Robertson, Jeremiah Wright refused to feed his parishioners lies.

What Jeremiah Wright knows, and told his flock—though make no mistake, they already knew it—is that 9/11 was neither the first, nor worst act of terrorism on American soil. The history of this nation for folks of color, was for generations, nothing less than an intergenerational hate crime, one in which 9/11s were woven into the fabric of everyday life: hundreds of thousands of the enslaved who died from the conditions of their bondage; thousands more who were lynched (as many as 10,000 in the first few years after the Civil War, according to testimony in the Congressional Record at the time); millions of indigenous persons wiped off the face of the Earth. No, to some, the horror of 9/11 was not new. To some it was not on *that* day that "everything changed." To some, everything changed four hundred years ago, when that first ship landed at what would become Jamestown. To some, everything changed when their ancestors were forced into the hulls of slave ships at Goree Island and brought to a strange land as chattel. To some, everything changed when they were run out of Northern Mexico, only to watch it become the Southwest United States, thanks to a war of annihilation initiated by the US government. To some, being on the receiving end of terrorism has been a way of life. Until recently it was absolutely *normal* in fact.

But white folks have a hard time hearing these simple truths. We find it almost impossible to listen to an alternative version of reality. Indeed, what seems to bother white people more than anything, whether in the recent episode, or at any other time, is being confronted with the recognition that black people do not, by and large, see the world like we do; that black people, by and large, do not view America as white people view it. We are, in fact, *shocked* that this should be so, having come to believe, apparently, that the falsehoods to which we cling like a kidney patient clings to a dialysis machine, are equally shared by our darker-skinned compatriots.

This is what James Baldwin was talking about in his classic 1972 work, *No Name in the Street*, wherein he noted:

> White children, in the main, and whether they are rich or poor, grow up with a grasp of reality so feeble that they can very accurately be described as deluded—about themselves and the world they live in. White people have managed to get through their entire lifetimes in this euphoric state, but black people have not been so lucky: a black man who sees the world the way John Wayne, for example, sees it would not be an eccentric patriot, but a raving maniac.

And so we were shocked in 1987, when Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall declined to celebrate the bicentennial of the Constitution, because, as he noted, most of that history had been one of overt racism and injustice, and to his way of thinking, the only history worth celebrating had been that of the past three or four decades.

We were shocked to learn that black people actually believed that a white cop who was a documented racist might frame a black man; and we're shocked to learn that lots of black folks still perceive the US as a racist nation—we're literally stunned that people who say they experience discrimination regularly (and who have the social science research to back them up) actually think that those experiences and that data might actually say something about the nation in which they reside. Imagine.

Whites are easily shocked by what we see and hear from Pastor Wright and Trinity Church, because what we see and hear so thoroughly challenges our understanding of who we are as a nation. But black people have never, for the most part, believed in the imagery of the "shining city on a hill," for they have never had the option of looking at their nation and ignoring the mountain-sized warts still dotting its face when it comes to race. Black people do not, in the main, get misty eyed at the sight of the flag the way white people do—and this is true even for millions of black veterans—for they understand that the nation for whom that flag waves is still not fully committed to their own equality. They have a harder time singing those

▸ **WRIGHT** continues on next page

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▸ **WRIGHT** continued from previous page

tunes that white people seem so eager to belt out, like "God Bless America," for they know that whites sang those words loudly and proudly even as they were enforcing Jim Crow segregation, rioting against blacks who dared move into previously white neighborhoods, throwing rocks at Dr. King and then cheering, as so many did, when they heard the news that he had been assassinated.

Whites refuse to remember (or perhaps have never learned) that which black folks cannot afford to forget. I've seen white people stunned to the point of paralysis when they learn the truth about lynchings in this country—when they discover that such events were not just a couple of good old boys with a truck and a rope hauling some black guy out to the tree, hanging him, and letting him swing there. They were never told the truth: that lynchings were often community events, advertised in papers as "Negro Barbecues," involving hundreds or even thousands of whites, who would join in the fun, eat chicken salad and drink sweet tea, all while the black victims of their depravity were being hung, then shot, then burned, and then having their body parts cut off, to be handed out to onlookers. They are stunned to learn that postcards of the events were traded as souvenirs, and that very few whites, including members of their own families did or said *anything* to stop it.

Rather than knowing about and confronting the ugliness of our past, whites take steps to excise the less flattering aspects of our history so that we need not be bothered with them. So in Tulsa, Oklahoma, for example, site of an orgy of violence against the black community in 1921, city officials literally went into the town library and removed all reference to the mass killings in the Greenwood district from the papers with a razor blade—an excising of truth and an assault on memory that would remain unchanged for over seventy years.

Most white people desire, or perhaps even require the propagation of lies when it comes to our history. Surely we prefer the lies to anything resembling, even remotely, the truth. Our version of history, of our national past, simply cannot allow for the intrusion of fact into a worldview so thoroughly identified with fiction. But that white version of America is not only extraordinarily incomplete, in that it so favors the white experience to the exclusion of others; it is more than that; it is actually a slap in the face to people of color, a re-injury, a reminder that they are essentially irrelevant, their concerns trivial, their lives unworthy of being taken seriously. In that sense, and what few if any white Americans appear capable of grasping at present, is that *Leave it to Beaver* and *Father Knows Best* portray an America so divorced from the reality of the times in which they were produced, as to raise serious questions about the sanity of those who found them so moving, so accurate, so real. These iconographic representations of life in the US are worse than selective, worse than false, they are assaults to the humanity and memory of black people, who were being savagely oppressed even as June Cleaver did housework in heels and laughed about the hilarious hijinks of Beaver and Larry Mondello.

These portraits of America are certifiable evidence of how disconnected white folks were—and to the extent we still love them and view them as representations of the "good old days" to which we wish we could return, still are—from those men and women of color with whom we have long shared a nation. Just two months before *Leave it to Beaver* debuted, proposed civil rights legislation was killed thanks to Strom Thurmond's 24-hour filibuster speech on the floor of the US Senate. One month prior, Arkansas Governor Orville Faubus called out the National Guard to block black students from entering Little Rock Central High; and nine days before America was introduced to the Cleavers, and the comforting image of national life they represented, those black students were finally allowed to enter, amid the screams of enraged, unhinged, viciously bigoted white people, who saw nothing wrong with calling children niggers in front of cameras. *That* was America of the 1950s: not the sanitized version into which so many escape thanks to the miracle of syndication, which merely allows white people to relive a lie, year after year after year.

No, it is not the pastor who distorts history; *Nick at Nite* and your teenager's textbooks do that. It is not he who casts aspersions upon "this great country," as Barack Obama put it in his public denunciations of him; it is the historic leadership of the nation that has cast aspersions upon it; it is they who have cheapened it, who have made gaudy and vile the promise of American democracy by defiling it with lies. They engage in a patriotism that is pathological in its implications, that asks of those who adhere to it not merely a love of country but the turning of one's nation into an idol to be worshipped, if not literally, then at least in terms of consequence.

No, it is not the pastor who distorts history; *Nick at Nite* and your teenager's textbooks do that.

It is they—the flag-lapel-pin wearing leaders of this land—who bring shame to the country with their nonsensical suggestions that we are always noble in warfare, always well-intended, and although we occasionally make mistakes, we are never the ones to blame for anything. Nothing that happens to us has anything to do with *us* at all. It is always about *them*. They are evil, crazy, fanatical, hate our freedoms, and are jealous of our prosperity. When individuals prattle on in this manner we diagnose them as narcissistic, as deluded. When nations do it—when *our* nation does—we celebrate it as though it were the very model of rational and informed citizenship.

So what can we say about a nation that values lies more than it loves truth? A place where adherence to sincerely believed and internalized fictions allows one to rise to the highest offices in the land, and to earn the respect of millions, while a willingness to challenge those fictions and offer a more accurate counter-narrative earns one nothing but contempt, derision, indeed outright hatred? What we can say is that such a place is signing its own death warrant. What we can say is that such a place is missing the only and last opportunity it may ever have to make things right, to live up to its professed ideals. What we can say is that such a place can never move forward, because we have yet to fully address and come to terms with that which lay behind.

The history of this nation for folks of color, was for generations, nothing less than an intergenerational hate crime, one in which 9/11s were woven into the fabric of everyday life

What can we say about a nation where white preachers can lie every week from their pulpits without so much as having to worry that their lies might be *noticed* by the shiny white faces in their pews, while black preachers who tell one after another essential truth are demonized, not only for the stridency of their tone—which needless to say scares white folks, who have long preferred a style of praise and worship resembling nothing so much as a coma—but for merely calling bullshit on those whose lies are swallowed whole?

And oh yes, I said it: white preachers lie. In fact, they lie with a skill, fluidity, and precision unparalleled in the history of either preaching or lying, both of which histories stretch back a ways and have often overlapped. They lie every Sunday, as they talk about a Savior they have chosen to represent dishonestly as a white man, in every picture to be found of him in their tabernacles, every children's story book in their Sunday Schools, every Christmas card they'll send to relatives and friends this December. But to lie about Jesus, about the one they consider God—to *bear false witness* as to who this man was and what he looked like—is no cause for concern.

Nor is it a problem for these preachers to teach and preach that those who don't believe as they believe are going to Hell. Despite the fact that such a belief casts aspersions upon God that are so profound as to defy belief—after all, they imply that God is so fundamentally evil that he would burn non-believers in a lake of eternal fire—many of the white folks who now condemn Jeremiah Wright welcome that theology of hate. Indeed, back when President Bush was the Governor of Texas, he endorsed this kind of thinking, responding to a question about whether Jews were going to go to Hell, by saying that unless one accepted Jesus as one's personal savior, the Bible made it pretty clear that indeed, hell was where you'd be heading.

So you can curse God in this way—and to imply such hate on God's part is surely to curse him—and in effect, curse those who aren't Christians, and no one says anything. *That* isn't considered bigoted. *That* isn't considered beyond the pale of polite society. One is not disqualified from becoming President in the minds of millions because they go to a church that says that shit every single week, or because they believe it themselves. And millions do believe it, and see nothing wrong with it whatsoever.

So white folks are mad at Jeremiah Wright because he challenges their views about their country. Meanwhile, those same white folks, and their ministers and priests, every week put forth a false image of the *God* Jeremiah Wright serves, and yet it is whites who feel we have the right to be offended.

Pardon me, but something is wrong here, and whatever it is, is not to be found at Trinity United Church of Christ.

Tim Wise is an anti-racist activist, writer, and lecturer. He has authored two books: White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son *and* Affirmative Action: Racial Preference in Black and White.

A collection of his essays, Speaking Treason Fluently: Anti-Racist Refelctions From an Angry White Male*, will be published this fall. His website is* timwise.org *.*

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▸ **BRIDGES** continued from page 1

this country does not grant non-citizens within its own borders.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids on the community

Considering the often-clandestine nature of ICE raids, and the lack of transparency within this branch of government, the specific details surrounding each incident have come from community accounts.

From 200-plus Del Monte factory workers targeted in Portland, to very recent early morning home abductions, and racial profiling at checkpoints set on public roads in the Shelton area, recent ICE raids in the Northwest have taken many forms. ICE officers have also targeted people of color in public places such as Safeway and Walmart, where they are singled out and commanded to produce documentation stating their legal status. If documents cannot be provided, then arrests are imminent.

> Run by a corporation called the GEO Group, the prison is contracted through the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) branch of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The most recent raids in Shelton took place more clandestinely, targeting small groups in the early morning where there was neither anyone around, nor media coverage possible. Near the beginning of March of this year—according to reports from the community in Shelton, WA—approximately five people from Guatemala were dragged from their apartments and arrested by ICE agents before dawn. Shortly after this incident, ICE officers chased down a vehicle of Mexican individuals on their way to do brush work (picking salal in the forest that surrounds the area). The occupants of the pursued vehicle were able to eventually get away on foot after abandoning their vehicle, at which point it was reported that the agents fired three shots.

Families and communities are being violently separated because of these raids and detentions. Children are being left behind without legal provisions because the State has no concern for their well being. There are approximately five million US children with either one or two undocumented parents, each child living with the fear of arbitrary separation every day. This generation of children will most likely grow up with a sense of abandonment, with psychological damage that will most likely only further perpetuate the extremely disproportionate amount of poverty and criminalization in communities of color.

Call to action

Is this the culture we want to live in? Do we value injustice, family separation and arbitrary criminalization of any member in our community? We are not accountable to our communities by remaining silent and passive in the face of all that is happening around us.

It is time for the residents of Thurston County to join our voices with the chorus of resistance and take a stand to demand an end to all raids in our communities. We need to take back this conversation and open discourse to look at how families—including mothers, fathers, sons and daughters—are being affected. The conversation surrounding immigration, however, cannot get very far if we are only looking at the issue through a lens of what is "legal", because this mentality is based on the presumption that the law is right, and therefore absolute, which is just not the case.

We, as human beings, are obligated to speak up, for it is a violation of human rights for the government to intrusively enter our communities and violently take hardworking mothers and fathers away from their children, and incarcerate them simply for being perceived as "illegal," criminalized for trying to raise healthy families.

Bridges Not Walls

Bridges Not Walls is a broad coalition that will not be complicit in oppressive actions taken against our communities anymore. Through grassroots organization and networking (working closely with existing groups like the Cielo Project and Inmigrantes Unidos de Shelton), Bridges Not Walls hopes to begin a new conversation around immigration by presenting The Immigration and Border Dialogues Conference. Taking place May 15-18 at the Evergreen State College in Olympia, the conference will be an opportunity for day-to-day folks to engage in the complexity of the discussion on migration, and will open up space for both community dialogue and the recognition of immigrant rights as human rights: rights that have no borders.

Through the conference we will tell the stories that have gone untold and give this discourse a human face. We want to tear down the walls that have been placed on ourselves and in our communities and are committed to begin to build bridges around our common values, which include the respect and dignity deserved by all—no matter where we've come from and what our "legal" status is. Through this dialogue we will begin to take a stand and speak out against the injustices in our society, and will no longer abide by the forces of repression that have continued to hurt our families and communities as a whole.

For more information please visit our website: -http://oly-wa.us/bridgesm or email us at bridgesnotwalls@riseup.net

AU brief rebukes Ralph's pharmacy religious claim

by Americans United for Separation of Church and State

A Washington State Board of Pharmacy regulation that requires pharmacies to dispense all medications in a timely manner does not trample on religious freedom rights and should be upheld, Americans United for Separation of Church and State has told a federal appeals court.

Attorneys with Americans United filed a friend-of-the-court brief in a case pending before the US Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit. In the brief, AU asks the appellate panel to send the decision back to the district court for consideration.

> "A pharmacy owner whose personal objection to dispensing a drug is based on his religion is treated no differently than a pharmacy owner whose personal objection to dispensing is motivated by secular concerns."

"Allowing pharmacists to put their religious beliefs between doctors and patients is a prescription for disaster," said Barry W. Lynn, executive director of Americans United. "These regulations are simply designed to make sure that pharmacists do the job they are paid to do."

The Washington pharmacy board acted after several incidents came to light in Washington and other states of pharmacists refusing to fill prescriptions for birth control pills, emergency contraception and other medications.

In its brief, AU notes that the state's pharmacy regulations accommodate objecting pharmacists. A pharmacist can, for example, pass a prescription along to a colleague at the same store.

Regulations Ensuring Patient Access To Medication Do Not Single Out Religious Belief

The AU brief asserts that the regulation does not single out religious beliefs, noting that some pharmacists have refused to fill prescriptions for reasons that have nothing to do with religion. Requiring pharmacies to fill prescriptions in a timely manner is a neutral regulation that does not single out religious beliefs for negative treatment, AU says.

"Given the Board's broad intent to preclude all personal objections from impeding access to medications, it is no surprise that the regulations do not target religious conduct for unfavorable treatment," reads the brief. "A pharmacy owner whose personal objection to dispensing a drug is based on his religion is treated no differently than a pharmacy owner whose personal objection to dispensing is motivated by secular concerns."

Americans United filed the brief in the Stormans, Inc. v. Selecky case in conjunction with the American Humanist Association.

Americans United is a religious liberty watchdog group based in Washington, D.C. Founded in 1947, the organization educates about the importance of church-state separation in safeguarding religious freedom.

Local Chapter Formed

Americans United for Separation of Church and State has formed the South Sound Chapter in Olympia.

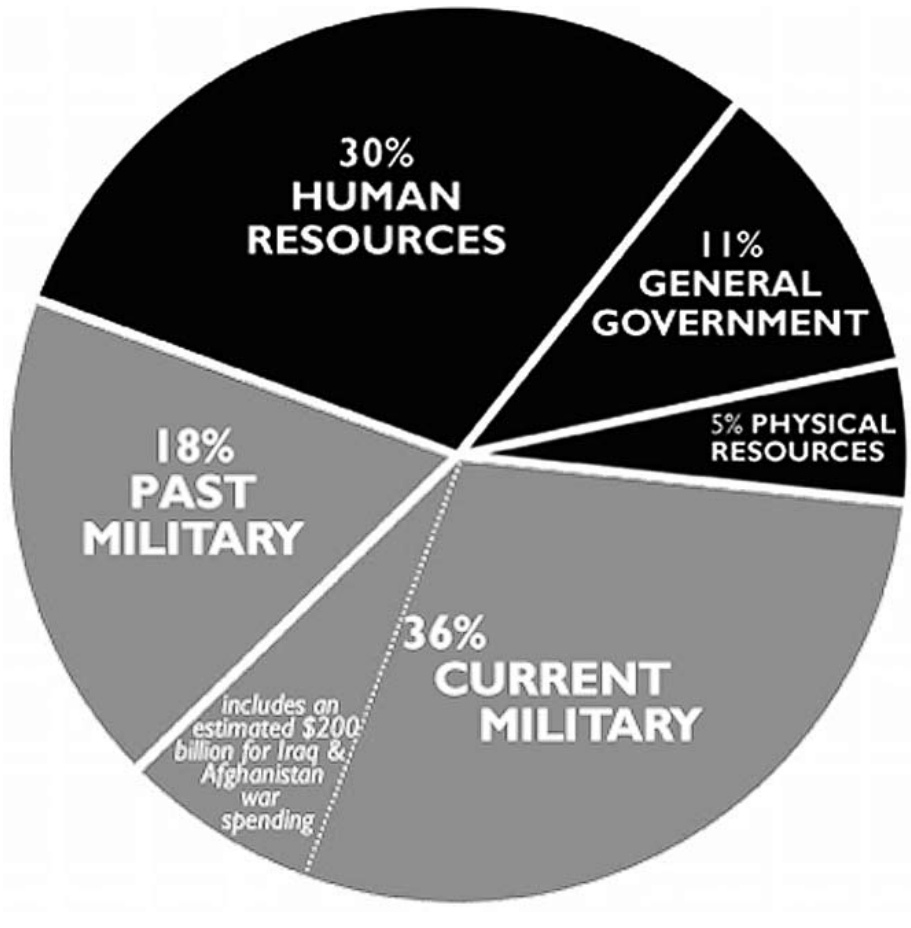
Americans United for Separation of Church and State is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization, founded in 1947 by a broad coalition of religious, educational and civic leaders. Americans United protects the separation of church and state by working on a wide range of pressing political and social issues.

Regular meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month at the Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 2200 E End St NW, Olympia.

For further information, contact Dennis Mansker, president@ausouthsound.org.

Where your income tax money *really* goes

The US Federal Budget, 2009 Fiscal Year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5% PHYSICAL RESOURCES
36% CURRENT MILITARY
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18% PAST MILITARY

Chart prepared by the War Resisters League
For more information, visit:
http://www.warresisters.org/pages/piechart.htm